



PROGRESSIVE NEWS UPDATE - March 22, 2001

<http://progressive.house.gov>

TAXES/BUDGET

1. Next Part of Bush Tax Cut Would Provide Even More Benefits to the Rich

LABOR

2. Score Another One for Big Business in the Bush Era
3. No, Mr. President, You Actually CAN'T Hammer Labor That Hard
4. We Should Not Expand NAFTA

ENERGY

5. Big Oil Gets Ready to Spend Big Money For Drilling
6. Surprise! California Consumers Getting Goughed by Energy Companies

ENVIRONMENT

7. Bush Gets Attacked for Allowing High Poison Levels in Water

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS/HEALTH

8. Bush Goes to Bat for Yet Another Industry
9. Drug Industry Should Not Be Allowed to Control FDA

POLITICS

10. White House Move Signals Effort to Create Right Wing Bench

CORPORATE POWER

11. New Trust Buster Looks More Like Trust Lover

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I think the best way to [enact tax relief] would be to take that estimated surplus at the end of this year, take an agreed-upon percentage of it, maybe two-thirds, and give it back to every taxpayer. The same amount to every taxpayer right now."

Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT), seeing the light on the Progressive Caucus's concept behind the American People's Dividend

SUMMARIES

1. NEXT PART OF BUSH TAX CUT WOULD PROVIDE HUGE BENEFITS TO RICH (news)

"The House of Representatives is now moving forward with HR 6, which would enact the second part of the Bush income tax cuts. (Earlier this month, the House approved HR 3, which would implement the President's proposed reduction in income tax rates.) A March 22 Citizens for Tax Justice analysis finds that the two House measures put forward so far would provide 31.3 percent of their income tax cuts to the best-off one percent of all taxpayers."

<http://www.ctj.org/html/gwbpart2.htm>.

2. SCORE ANOTHER ONE FOR BIG BUSINESS IN THE BUSH ERA (news)

"The Supreme Court handed employers a major victory today by ruling that companies can insist that workplace disputes go to arbitration rather than to court. The 5-to-4 decision resolved a disagreement among the lower federal courts about the scope of the Federal Arbitration Act, a 76-year-old law that makes arbitration agreements enforceable in federal court."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/22/business/22BIZC.html>

3. NO, MR. PRESIDENT, YOU ACTUALLY CAN'T HAMMER LABOR THAT HARD (news)

"The White House toned down President Bush's sweeping promise to prevent airline strikes, acknowledging that the president has limited independent power to intervene in such disputes. Earlier this month, Mr. Bush sparked jubilation among airline companies and anger among union leaders by saying he intended to "take the necessary steps to prevent airline strikes."

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB985212382909442805.htm>

4. WE SHOULD NOT EXPAND NAFTA (editorial)

"Working in conjunction with the corporate interests that so generously funded his presidential campaign, Bush will seek "fast-track" authority to negotiate the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas - a sweeping expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement designed to create a corporate free-trade zone from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic. The product of business and government collusion to limit the ability of citizens to protect workers and the environment through regulation of multinational firms, this is classic globalization from above."

<http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0321-04.htm>

5. BIG OIL GETS READY TO SPEND BIG MONEY FOR DRILLING (news)

"The oil industry and groups backing the effort to drill for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have announced a \$200,000 dollar advertising campaign for the Washington market which it hopes will sway votes in Congress over to its side of the debate."

<http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/03/21/oil.ad.campaign/index.html>

6. SURPRISE! CALIFORNIA CONSUMERS GETTING RIPPED OFF BY ENERGY COMPANIES (news)

"Wholesale electricity suppliers overcharged California by about \$5.5 billion between May and last month, and that money should be refunded to the state's taxpayers and financially strapped utilities, the state power grid operator said Wednesday. Generators engaged in market manipulation and consistent patterns of bidding far above costs in the deregulated energy market, the California Independent System Operator found in a study of pricing data."

<http://www.latimes.com/print/asection/20010322/t000024908.html>

7. BUSH ATTACKED FOR ALLOWING HIGH POISON LEVELS IN WATER (news)

"The Sierra Club today expressed grave concern over the Bush Administration's decision to withdraw the recently revised standard for cancer-causing arsenic in America's drinking water. The move rejects an effort by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency earlier this year to protect more than 22 million Americans from this poison, further delaying the much-needed and long-awaited clean-up and signaling another Bush Administration bow to the mining industry."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news2001/0320-10.htm>

8. BUSH GOES TO BAT FOR YET ANOTHER BIG INDUSTRY (news)

"Members of Congress from both parties criticized President Bush Wednesday after he announced his opposition to legislation that would give patients broad rights to sue managed-care companies. Leading backers of a bipartisan "patients' bill of rights" charged that Bush, by threatening a veto, was siding with the managed-care industry over patients."

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washdc/2001-03-22-patientsrights.htm>

9. DRUG INDUSTRY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTROL FDA (editorial)

"The \$100-billion-a-year pharmaceutical industry, which contributed \$4.4 million to George W. Bush and the Republican Party in last year's election campaigns, is now pressing the administration to select one of three favored-son candidates to head the Food and Drug Administration. It is no surprise that all three--Searle Vice President Michael Friedman, Wyeth-Ayerst Pharmaceuticals executive Bruce Burlington and Merck Research Laboratories President Ed Scolnick--hold high positions in the industry they would oversee, and that is unacceptable."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/comment/20010322/t000024721.html>

10. WHITE HOUSE MOVES SIGNALS EFFORT TO CREATE RIGHT WING BENCH (editorial)

“With his ambiguous, not to say pathetic, mandate, George W. Bush has set out to fashion an all right-wing bench. That, at least, is the signal that can be taken from his moves to protect the selection of judges from contamination by opinions of the American Bar Association.”

<http://www.newsday.com/columnists/stories/thursday/nd4695.htm>

11. NEW TRUSTBUSTER LOOKS MORE LIKE TRUST LOVER (news)

“Signaling a sharp shift in the enforcement of the nation's antitrust laws, the White House announced its intention today to nominate Timothy J. Muris, a leading critic of the Clinton administration's antitrust policies, to become the next head of the Federal Trade Commission. Legal experts predicted today that it is certain to lead to a significant easing of reviews of corporate mergers and a far less aggressive policy towards monopolization cases.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/22/politics/22CND-FTC.html>